

Message Text

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42

ACTION NODS-00

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R 051037Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 932

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 5861

NODIS

CHEROKEE FOR THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE

SUBJECT: DETAILS OF PRELIMINARY CONTACTS WITH PLO RE PROTECTIVE
SECURITY

REF: BEIRUT 5741

1. IN ABSENCE OF POUCH SERVICES AND IN ORDER TO PROVIDE YOU WITH
THE FLAVOR OF OUR FIRST SECURITY CONTACT WITH THE PLO, I AM
SUBMITTING BY CABLE FOLLOWING MEMORANDUM PREPARED BY REGIONAL
SECURITY OFFICER TELFORD.

2. WITH AMBASSADOR SEELYE'S APPROVAL DIRECT SECURITY CONTACT
WAS ESTABLISHED ON THE EVENING OF JUNE 30 BETWEEN THE AMERICAN
EMBASSY AND THE PLO. THROUGH THE UNISIAN EMBASSY AS
INTERMEDIARY, RSO O'BRIEN AND I MET WITH MAJOR "AHMED,"
CHIEF OF BEIRUT FATAH SECURITY AND PLO OFFICIAL IDENTIFIED AS
MR. ABOU JAAFFAR, DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS.

3. MAJOR AHMED ARRIVED AT THE CHANCERY AT ABOUT 1900, JUNE 30,
AND STATED THAT ARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN MADE FOR A MEETING WITH
MR. ABOU JAAFFAR IN HIS OFFICE LOCATED IN THE SABRA/SHATILA
PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CAMP. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD SAFELY
ESCORT US TO THE CAMP AND BACK TO THE CHANCERY. I INDICATED
SURPRISE THAT WE WOULD NOT BE MEETING ONLY WITH MAJOR AHMED.
HE SAID THAT "WE MUST" MEET MR. ABOU JAAFFAR. THE REASON
LATER BECAME EVIDENT.

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4. WE DEPARTED THE CHANCERY AT ABOUT 1910 WITH MAJOR AHMED AND THREE ARMED MEMBERS OF FATAH. THERE MAY HAVE BEEN ADDITIONAL SECURITY, BUT IT WAS NOT VISIBLE TO US. BOTH O'BRIEN AND I WENT UNARMED AND WITHOUT RADIOS.

5. WE TRAVELED ALONG THE CORNICHE AND BRANCHED OFF ONTO THE CORNICHE MAASRA AT THE INTERNATIONAL HOTEL. APPROXIMATELY FOUR BLOCKS PAST THE INTERSECTION OF CORNICHE MAAZRA AND RUE HABIB ABI CHHLA, WE TURNED RIGHT AND ONE BLOCK LATER TURNED LEFT ONTO HABIB ABI CHAHLA.

6. FROM THAT POINT WE TRAVELED TO THE INTERSECTION KNOWN AS "COCA-COLA CIRCLE" OF HABIB ABI CHALA AND RUE SOLEIMAN BOUSTARY. THIS INTERSECTION IS PASSED OVERHEAD BY AVENUE CAMILLE CHAMOUN. AT THE INTERSECTION WE BORE TO THE RIGHT ONTO RUE SOLEIMAN BOUSTARY AND TURNED INTO THE THIRD STREET ON THE LEFT; WE CAME TO A STOP IN THE CENTER OF THE BLOCK. THE BUILDING HOUSING THE OFFICE FOR OUR VISIT WAS ON OUR RIGHT. LANDMARKS IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY ARE THE SANDS PRISON ONE BLOCK FURTHER ON RUE SOLEIMAN BOUSTARY, ARAB UNIVERSITY AND THE STADE MUNICIPAL.

7. MAJOR AHMED LED US UP SIX FLIGHTS OF STAIRS TO THE OFFICE OF MR. ABOU JAAFFAR. THE INTRODUCTION WAS VERY CORDIAL. MAJOR AHMED REMAINED DURING THE ENTIRE MEETING.

8. ABOU JAAFFAR SAID "WELCOME. WE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU." WE THEN THANKED MR. ABOU JAAFFAR ON BEHALF OF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF THE PLO DURING THE JUNE 20 US NAVY EVACUATION, THE AIRPORT ASSISTANCE OF JUNE 25 AND DURING THE ARRIVAL OF AMBASSADOR SEELYE JUNE 26.

9. ABOU JAAFFAR SAID THAT MAJOR AHMED'S MEN WERE PROVIDING SECURITY ASSISTANCE FOR THE FRENCH, BRITISH AND OTHER EMBASSIES. HE ADDED THAT THIS "IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY." HE SAID THAT THE PLO WAS HAPPY TO ASSIST US BUT IT HAD BEEN AWKWARD THROUGH AN INTERMEDIARY.

10. ABOU JAAFFAR WAS TOLD THAT AMBASSADOR SEELYE, AS THE PRESIDENT'S SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE, WOULD BE MEETING WITH MANY CONFIDENTIAL

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PERSONS IN BEIRUT OUTSIDE OF OUR EMBASSY. AFTER THE TRAGIC DEATH OF AMBASSADOR MELOY AND ROBERT WARING, WE WERE ASKING, ON THE BEHALF OF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY, FOR APPROPRIATE SECURITY TO ENSURE THE SAFE TRAVEL OF AMBASSADOR SEELYE. ABOU JAAFFAR SAID THE PLO WOULD BE PLEASED TO ASSIST. WE SUGGESTED THAT WE ARRANGE FOR DIRECT LIAISON WITH MAJOR AHMED FOR ALL MOVEMENTS, AND ADVISED MAJOR AHMED AND ABOU JAAFFAR THAT TELFORD WOULD SOON BE LEAVING LEBANON AND THAT HIS REPLACEMENT

WOULD BE BOB O'BIREN. ABOU JAAFFAR THEN GAVE A RATHER LENGTHY DIALOGUE WHICH IN ESSENCE WAS THAT WE MUST COORDINATE ALL ASSISTANCE THROUGH THE POLITICAL DIRECTORATE OF THE PLO (ABOU JAAFFAR) AND NOT WITH FATAH OR MAJOR AHMED. HE SAID THAT THIS WAS THE MEANS SET UP FOR COORDINATION WITH THE BRITISH, FRENCH, GERMANS, ETC. HE SAID THAT HE MET DAILY, IN THE OFFICE IN WHICH WE WERE PRESENT, WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THESE VARIOUS EMBASSIES.

11. HE DESCRIBED SOME OF THE ASSISTANCE THE PLO WAS GIVING OR REQUESTED, SUCH AS CONVOY PROTECTION FOR THE SOVIETS TO SIDON IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS WHERE THEY WOULD DEPART BY SHIP. IN THIS REGARD, HE SAID THAT COORDINATION HAD BEEN MADE BETWEEN THE SOVIETS AND THE SYRIANS FOR CESSATION OF FIRE INTO SIDON DURING THE CONVOY MOVEMENT. HE CONTINUED BY SAYING THAT SEVERAL GOVERNMENTS HAD ASKED FOR SECURITY OF THEIR CHANCERIES AND EVEN RESIDENCES OF THEIR PERSONNEL. ABOU JAAFFAR STATED THAT THE LATTER REQUESTS WERE DIFFICULT TO FULFILL. HOWEVER, HE "WOULD HELP" THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN THIS REGARD IF WE DESIRED. WE SAID THAT WE WOULD PERHAPS DISCUSS THIS IN THE FUTURE, BUT FOR THE PRESENT OUR NEED WAS FOR STRICTLY SECURITY LIAISON AND ASSISTANCE FOR OUR AMBASSADOR. BOB O'BRIEN THEN GAVE ABOU JAAFFAR THE SCHEDULE FOR THE FOLLOWING DAY OF AMBASSADOR SEELYE'S APPOINTMENTS WITH SAAB SALAM AND KAMAL JUNBLATT. MAJOR AHMED WAS INSTRUCTED BY ABOU JAAFFAR TO SET UP APPROPRIATE SECURITY AND CONTACT BOB O'BRIEN AT THE SPECIFIED TIME AT THE AMERICAN EMBASSY. BOB THEN ARRANGED WITH ABOU JAAFFAR A MEANS BY WHICH HE COULD CONTACT JAAFFAR IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY OR DURING LAST-MINUTE UNSCHEDULED MOVEMENTS OF THE AMBASSADOR. JAAFFAR ADVISED THAT THE FIRST MEANS SHOULD BE BY TELEPHONE REQUESTING THAT SOMEONE FROM THE POLITICAL DIRECTORATE'S OFFICE OF MAJOR AHMED TRAVEL TO THE AMERICAN EMBASSY TO MEET WITH O'BRIEN. CONFIDENTIAL

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SECONDLY, O'BRIEN HIMSELF, SHOULD TRAVEL TO JAAFFAR'S OFFICE. JAAFFAR WAS TOLD THAT FOR SECURITY REASONS THAT WOULD BE DIFFICULT, BUT WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO ARRANGE FOR A MESSAGE TO BE SENT VIA TAXI. WE THEN DECIDED TO TRY THE LATTER.

12. LAST BUT NOT LEAST, WE BROUGHT UP THE SUBJECT OF THE VEHICLE IN WHICH AMBASSADOR MELOY AND ROBERT WARING WERE RIDING DURING THE TRAGIC DAY. JAAFFAR WAS TOLD THAT THERE WAS UNCONFIRMED INFORMATION WHICH LED US TO BELIEVE THAT ABU IYAD OF THE PLO WAS AWARE OF THE PRESENT WHEREABOUTS OF THE VEHICLE. HE WAS THEN TOLD THAT THE VEHICLE WAS SEEN IN A GARAGE BELONGING TO AN UNIDENTIFIED SOURCE AND THAT THE SOURCE REPORTEDLY WITNESSED THE CAR BEING TOWED AWAY. JAAFFAR SAID HE WOULD LOOK INTO THE MATTER IMMEDIATELY. TELFORD THEN SAID THAT OUR CONCERN WAS NOT JUST THE RETURN OF THE VEHICLE. WHAT

WE NEEDED WAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO INSPECT THE VEHICLE IN CONJUNCTION WITH OUR INVESTIGATION OF THE FACTS OF THE INCIDENT. HE THEN SAID THAT WE SHOULD EXCHANGE INFORMATION. HE WAS TOLD THAT WE DID NOT HAVE ANY INFORMATION THAT HAD NOT ALREADY APPEARED IN THE PRESS. THIS WAS THE VERY REASON THAT WE NEEDED TO VIEW THE VEHICLE.

13. DURING THE MEETING AN UNIDENTIFIED MALE ENTERED THE ROOM AND WHISPERED FOR SEVERAL MINUTES TO JAAFFAR. JAAFFAR'S EXPRESSION CHANGED. IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO OUR DEPARTURE, JAAFFAR SAID THAT THE MAN HAD BROUGHT BAD NEWS ABOUT THE BATTLE IN JISR AL-BASHA. HE SAID THAT THE CHRISTIANS HAD ENTERED AND KILLED WOUNDED WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

14. THE MEETING ENDED WITH FRIENDLY HANDSHAKES AND ANTICIPATION THAT ABOUT JAAFFAR AND RSO O'BRIEN WOULD MEET AGAIN SOON.

15. AT 0900 ON JULY 3, BOB O'BRIEN BEGAN TRYING TO CONTACT JAAFFAR IN PREPARATION FOR THE AMBASSADOR'S VISIT TO RAYMOND EDDE AND THE EGYPTIAN EMBASSY BOTH SCHEDULED FOR THAT DAY. BY CHANCE, THE TELEPHONES WERE WORKING, BUT O'BRIEN WAS TOLD BY JAAFFAR'S OFFICE THAT HE WAS NOT IN. HE WAS INFORMED THAT BOTH JAAFFAR AND THE MAJOR WERE TIED UP AT THE AIRPORT. O'BRIEN THEN SENT A MESSAGE. FINALLY, AT ABOUT 1830, MAJOR AHMED ARRIVED AT THE EMBASSY AND ESCORTED BOTH OF US TO SEE JAAFFAR. THE MEETING WAS HELD IN THE SAME OFFICE AS OUR FIRST VISIT OF

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JUNE 30.

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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R 051037Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 933

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16. UPON ARRIVAL AND AFTER AMENITIES, RSO O'BRIEN RECOUNTED THE EVENTS OF THE DAY AND OF OUR ATTEMPTS TO CONTACT JAAFFAR'S OFFICE. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THESE CALLS WERE RECEIVED; HOWEVER, HE HIMSELF WAS NOT PRESENT. HE FURTHER EXPLAINED THAT HE WAS VERY BUSY AT THE AIRPORT AND THAT MAJOR AHMED WAS BUSY AT SIDON. IT WAS DISCOVERED DURING THE CONVERSATION THAT JAAFFAR WAS IN FACT AT HIS OFFICE BUT WAS UNABLE TO DEAL WITH OUR REQUESTS. IN SEEKING A SOLUTION TO THE CONTACT PROBLEM, IT WAS AGREED THAT A REPRESENTATIVE OF HIS OFFICE WOULD CONTACT RSO O'BRIEN EACH MORNING AT 1000 BEGINNING 5 JULY 1976. AT THIS TIME OUR ESCORT REQUIREMENTS WOULD BE SET FORTH.

17. THE SECOND SUBJECT DISCUSSED, AT THE AMBASSADOR'S INSTRUCTION, CONCERNED THE PLACEMENT OF THE ROCKET LAUNCHER AND MORTAR TUBE IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE CHANCERY. AFTER SOME DISCUSSION, IT WAS ADMITTED THAT THE ROCKET LAUNCHER WAS OPERATED BY FATAH. JAAFFAR STATED THIS WOULD BE "LOOKED INTO" AND THEY WOULD "SEE WHAT THEY COULD DO" TO RELOCATE THIS WEAPON. AS THE MORTAR WAS OPERATED BY THE LAA THEY COULD NOT PROMISE ANYTHING.

18. THE THIRD POINT DISCUSSED CONCERNED THE WHEREABOUTS OF AMBASSADOR MELOY'S CAR AS A FOLLOW-UP TO OUR FIRST DISCUSSION. JAAFFAR STATED THAT THE VEHICLE WAS IN THE HANDS OF ABU IYAD OF THE PLO. THE RSO STATED THE EMBASSY'S DESIRE TO RECOVER THE VEHICLE IN ORDER TO CONTINUE OUR INVESTIGATION. CONFIDENTIAL

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JAAFFAR STATED THAT ABU IYAD DESIRED OUR COOPERATION TO CONTINUE THEIR INVESTIGATION OF THE MURDERS. RSO'S O'BRIEN AND TELFORD AGAIN REITERATED THE EMBASSY'S DESIRE TO REGAIN POSSESSION OF THE VEHICLE AND QUESTIONED WHEN WE WOULD BE ALLOWED TO AT LEAST INSPECT IT. JAAFFAR COUNTERED WITH A REQUEST THAT THE RSO'S MEET WITH REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PLO TO "TRADE" INFORMATION. IT WAS IMPLIED THAT SUCH A "TRADE" WOULD BE A PREREQUISITE FOR VIEWING THE AUTOMOBILE. RO'S INDICATED THAT THE REQUEST WOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE AMBASSADOR AND HIS DECISION WOULD BE RELAYED TO JAAFFAR AT A LATER MEETING. (WE WILL DO NOTHING FURTHER UNTIL WE CLARIFY WHAT THE PLO HAS IN MIND.)

19. THE FINAL AREA OF DISCUSSION CENTERED ON THE SOON TO BE ISSUED I.D. CARDS. IT WAS EXPLAINED THAT THESE CARDS WOULD

BE ISSUED BY THE PLO TO ALL WHO REQUESTED THEM. THE CARD
WILL BE IN ARABIC AND ENGLISH AND WILL SERVE AS A LAISSEZ
PASSER REQUESTING THE BEARER BE ASSISTED AND PROVIDED
ANY HELP REQUIRED. IN THE INTERIM, THE PLO HAS ISSUED LAISSEZ
PASSERS IN LETTER FORM TO MANY FOREIGNERS AND DIPLOMATS.

20. THE MEETING ENDED CORDIALLY AND WITH THE EXPECTATION OF
FURTHER MEETINGS.

SEELYE

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Message Attributes

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